The Canadian Institute of Strategic Studies

de L'Institut Canadien D'Etudes Stratégiques

CARE TO WIN: MILITARY DOCTRINE IN SUPPORT OF HUMAN SECURITY CENTRED FOREIGN POLICIES

Capt. Stephen D. Thompson
Strategic Datalink #98
August 2001

Introduction

The popular conception of the military's role is that it exists to apply coercive power against a state's enemies. Yet historically, militaries have also served as an aspiring empire's explorers, magistrates, and colonial governors. In this century, militaries led reconstruction efforts following the Second World War. These skills are being re-discovered and focused under the civil-affairs rubric in the post-modern age, yet the bulk of military funding, innovation, and intellectual effort remains fixed on the Cold War force-on-force paradigm that is failing to succeed in modern conflicts. John Ralston Saul, the Canadian political philosopher wrote about Yugoslavia:

> This typical post-war conflict involves irregular, mobile combat which mixes armies and civilians, professionals and amateurs, low cost equipment and public terror. From 1960 on, the concurrent number of these wars has steadily risen to more than fifty. At the same time, Western armies have concentrated on developing a post-modern, high-tech, abstract idea of professional warfare, which involves large-scale formalised clashes of titans, and above all, of titanic equipment. The results are that the largest and most sophisticated armies in the history of the world are by training, equipment, and attitude incapable of fighting real modern wars.[1]

International dispute resolution mechanisms and practices failed to prevent the Rwandan genocide, the Cambodian pogrom, and ethnic cleansing in the former-Yugoslavia. Superbly equipped, well-trained militaries were unable to wrest victory in Afghanistan, Vietnam, or Chechnya. Militaries continue to stagnate in a force-on-force structure that is becoming increasingly irrelevant and unusable to their political masters. This is becoming particularly true of land forces that simply cannot be used for anything close to what they were and are designed to do – fight and win.

If militaries hope to remain relevant and useful to states, they must understand that engaging in modern conflict infers that human rights, humanitarianism, and governance are as important as small arms weapons proficiency and battlefield survival. They must 'care to win', embracing a human security perspective as a backdrop to doctrine development, training and mission planning and execution. This unique people- centred perspective will meet the domestic political challenges and operational imperatives of modern security operations.

Human Security

Human security should viewed as a perspective rather than a policy or doctrine. It takes as its starting point the security and safety of the individual, not the state. It does not diminish the importance of the nation state, because that particular legal organisation is generally viewed as a tried method of providing security to its citizens. Rather, it seeks to support state systems provide for the safety of people through two broad strategies: strengthening legal norms and building the capacity to enforce them.[2] National resources that support a human security perspective must therefore focus on ways and means to affect these two strategies. Many programmes such as international development initiatives, and military and police training programmes already partially fill this aim by fostering and supporting democratic governance. The move to a democratic, inclusive government that is responsive and responsible to its citizens is a key aspect of the human security perspective.

Another key element of the human security perspective is the realisation and acceptance that people exist in a highly interconnected world. An infectious disease that threatens a population in sub-Saharan Africa will likely find its way to the streets of Toronto, and the farming communities of the American mid-West. In this environment, national interests are becoming increasingly difficult to define as separate from global interests. This is confusing to policy makers who only know the relative stability that the super power stalemate produced.

A by-product of successful human security based policies is a world of nations capable of possessing

'sustainable security'. This maybe defined as the "ability of a society to solve its own problems peacefully without an external administrative or military presence."[3] This is more than an altruistic goal. States that can achieve sustainable security are also stable and can be developed as markets within the international economy. Moreover, a human security perspective emphasises conflict prevention. This in turn reduces overall humanitarian costs, both in terms of suffering, and fiscal resources. Populations not involved in conflict, and who enjoy a stable and secure lifestyle make good markets. This concept is important not only for the super-economies, but also for countries like Canada which counts 42% of its Gross Domestic Product (GDP) from trade and is particularly vulnerable to instability.[4] As Madeline Albright, the former US Secretary of State has pointed out, economics lie at the hub of foreign policies and stability is the key to economic prosperity.[5]

Critics complain that a human security perspective reduces the military's traditional dominance of the security component of a nation's foreign policy.[6] However, coercive force in the form of sanctions or the outright prosecution of war is envisioned within the human security agenda rubric after all other avenues of resolution have been exhausted. [7] General-purpose combat capabilities are still required, and are still a vital part of securing world peace and security within the framework of legal international dispute resolution instruments like the UN Charter . The North Atlantic Treaty Organisation's (NATO) war against Yugoslavia, despite its legal and doctrinal flaws, is an interesting example of military force being used ostensibly in the pursuit of human security objectives. Moreover, peacekeeping and humanitarian assistance missions have clearly demonstrated that such undertakings are anything but stable and peaceful.[8] Military forces engaged in such activities must be robust, and enjoy the political support required to fulfil their assigned missions.

An excellent contemporary example of a human security perspective being applied at the international level is Article 14 of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1270. In articulating the UN peacekeeping mandate in Sierra Leone, the Security Council authorised the use of military force, under Chapter VII of the UN Charter. Peacekeepers are authorised "to take the necessary action to ensure the security and freedom of movement of its personnel and, within its capabilities and areas of deployment, to afford protection to civilians under imminent threat of physical violence..."

Human security policy takes into account the human cost of its implementing strategies, especially where those strategies are coercive in nature. For example, the long-term effects of sanctions on the populations of target regimes must be clearly understood. These impacts must be studied not only from a near-term perspective (immediate malnutrition and health effects for example), but also from a long-term socio-political perspective. Questions must be asked such as, "will the imposition of sanctions create and promote a black market economy that will in ultimately lead to regional economic and political destabilisation?" American support of the Taliban resistance fighters during the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan, and Western support for the KLA during the Kosovo conflict are an excellent examples of unanticipated 'blowback' that may have been averted if the long-term human security consequences of such support been understood.

The Operational Imperative Of Human Security

So far, this paper has discussed what human security is. But what benefits does a human security perspective provide to military forces? For one, the policy emphasises integration and co-ordination. Modern military operations are almost always carried out in multi-national and multi-disciplinary environments where situational knowledge includes an understanding of those pursuing similar security objectives. For example, modern peace support operations are carried out by a variety of players each of whom operate in a legal framework that includes human rights, humanitarian, and refugee law in addition to the international public law normally associated with international endeavours. All of this implies comprehensive co-ordination and in-theatre co-operation coupled with joint professional pre-deployment training. In fact, the Agenda for Peace identifies "managing these overlapping mandates and objectives as one of the principal challenges for a human security agenda."[9]

Human security perspectives can be tactically useful. For example, a group of US soldiers directing traffic in Kosovo earlier this year harassed and mistreated the local Kosovar population that they were assigned to protect.[10] These actions did nothing to instil the confidence or trust of the local population in KFOR. The outcome may have been different however if that same group of soldiers had been trained to instinctively conform to international human rights standards in their dealings with the civilian population. Their efforts would have been even more effective if they had been able to identify and empathise with the people they were ostensibly there to help.

The Technology Trap

A discussion centred on the ways that militaries should change their perspectives in the post-modern age would be incomplete without a brief foray into the hype that is the Revolution in Military Affairs (RMA). The promise of RMA is a military force and national command structure with complete battlespace awareness, or perfect information available where and when needed, on the location and intentions of the enemy. It seeks to dominate information *writ large* and deny the adversary command and control capacity. Ultimately, it seeks a push button war that provides near perfect force protection and that returns political utility to military forces.

Paradigm militaries of the late 20th and early 21st centuries are facing an interesting conundrum. Weaned on the absolute necessity to innovate within a rational state structure, and organise around a complex vertical hierarchy, military bureaucrats and their civilian boosters are finding themselves continuously beaten by small groups of mobile, flexible, and entirely 'unprofessional' forces. Let us go back to the KFOR weapons sweep operation mentioned earlier. Nine battalions of heavily-armed and seemingly well-trained NATO occupation forces were forced to retreat in the face of an angry rock-throwing Serb mob controlled by a few agitators armed with whistles.[11] Technology, heretofore relied upon to

advance strategic military flexibility, has been unable to deliver on a panacea of promises to make the prosecution of war more palatable to western democracies. A reliance on technology and worse, a culture of technological conceit has caught more than one great power off guard whether it be in Vietnam, Afghanistan, Chechnya, Bosnia, or Kosovo.

There are no guarantees that technology provides a tactical edge, especially against adversaries who operate asymmetrically, and who do not allow force protection to dominate their operations.[12] As Colonel Walter Semiamiw, a Canadian infantry officer rightly points out, "Technology is only one component of the essence of war."[13] Technology however, can support a human security perspective when it is used to protect civilian populations, and when it supports one of the two goals through two broad strategies: strengthening legal norms and building the capacity to enforce them. For example, information from American electronic intelligence assets were key in securing war crime indictments against President Milosevic.[14] Mistakes and tactics aside, guided munitions have the potential to reduce civilian casualties.

Military Personnel - Care To Win

Military organisation and structural reform is required to affect human security perspectives. Over the past several centuries, conventional state militaries have been required to organise and operate in a hierarchical manner, employing a top-down approach to planning and operations. Modern information systems are increasingly challenging this approach by placing critical 'total battle space' knowledge at previously unheard of tactical levels. Militaries will be under increasing pressure to recruit, train, and trust highly intelligent soldiers capable of making decisions of strategic importance at the lowest possible level. Those soldiers must have a tactical situational awareness that is simultaneously infused with a general strategic and operational appreciation of their actions. This appreciation will require a framework that will guide decisions and shape the formulation of doctrine. A human security perspective provides an excellent normative framework for this purpose. It not only encourages integration, co-operation, co-ordination, but also holds at its core a respect for human rights norms, inclusive democratic governance, and respect for the individual.

Tomorrow's militaries – especially those seeking to become involved in complex emergencies – must be comprised of people who instinctively understand their domestic and international obligations, and who can instantaneously shift between combat and non-combat operations. Those whose "professional ethos [is] shaped exclusively by the warrior spirit [will be] only partially [prepared] for the cognitive demands of future missions."[15] This poses a unique human resource management challenge for those recruiting, selecting, and training military personnel.

Pitfalls Of Employing A Human Security Perspective In The Information Age

Public support for military operations often depends on the public's perceptions of the military's success or failure. This was true in Vietnam, and Afghanistan, and it is true today in Kosovo and Chechnya.[16] Without popular support, Western military involvement becomes problematic, and in some systems of government where financial power lies outside of the executive, impossible. This makes preparing the population for military operations as important as preparing the military force itself. Information must be carefully crafted, and in some cases fabricated or modified to gain and keep popular support.[17]

Another concern is the impetus to speed up the political decision-making process. Thomas Durell Young of the US Naval Postgraduate School has warned of the risk to military forces posed by slow political decision-making processes.

> "Higher operational speed may therefore precipitate future crises in civil-military operations ... proposed military operations will be put at risk due to painfully slow political decision-making, particularly in a coalition."[18] "One can envisage where potential operational speed could be unrealised due to the desire on the part of ministers to maintain control over operations."[19]

Does this imply bypassing the traditional checks and balances of civilian control over the military in the interests of shortening the decision loop? If militaries are allowed this type of strategic freedom, they must be perfectly grounded in the application of a human security perspective. Without this ingrained sense of human rights and humanitarianism, the temptation of the military to stretch the principles of proportionality and distinction would be great.

There is a flipside to establishing and strengthening human rights norms as a conflict prevention strategy. Human right violations, real or perceived, can be used as a tool to capture the hearts and minds of the Western polity. Human suffering gourmands who refuse by intellectual ability or capacity to understand the history and background of a given crisis can exert an enormous amount of pressure on their governments to act. Tipper Gore, for example, the wife of former American Vice President Al Gore, visited the refugee camps in eastern Zaire in 1996 and thought she was visiting the victims of the 1994 Rwandan genocide. [20]

Non-western-styled militaries may not have any incentive to invest in the capabilities promised by new technologies. In fact, an asymmetrical approach to warfare, backed by solid political support may be a fair substitute for the latest weapon system.[21]

The conduct of modern military operations brings with it legal ramifications that are no longer academic curiosities. When Yugoslavia laid war crime charges in its domestic courts against Western leaders, it was reported in US newspapers.[22] Canada, the sponsor of the Human Security Agenda, faces legal action in the International Court of Justice for failing "to protect the civilian population and civilian objects in wartime, [in its] obligation to protect the environment, [its] obligation regarding fundamental human rights and freedoms, and [its] obligation not to use prohibited weapons."[23] Moreover, NATO's war against Yugoslavia placed Western militaries and their commanders-in-chief "within the jurisdiction of an international tribunal which they thought applied only to Balkan peoples." These legal manoeu-

vrings build in weight, becoming politically significant as they are incrementally applied. When added to credible third party accounts of the events, future policy decisions are influenced. Intervention, even with the best of intentions, may be ruled too risky.

Conclusion

The military has a significant non-traditional role to play in supporting human security objectives. Militaries experienced in peacekeeping operations are fully cognisant of the ancillary roles that represent the mission reality of modern conflict. Although the primary function of the military in these endeavours is to provide a secure environment in which others can seek solutions to their differences and create a society capable of sustainable security, they must be prepared to assist their multi-disciplinary colleagues.

A military doctrine that has embraced and mainstreamed a human security perspective is the most effective and efficient way for the international community to contribute to a society's chances of achieving, retaining, or rebuilding sustainable security. This end state in turn is best served by ensuring that strategies and practices are designed to ensure human security. Operations undertaken under the aegis of human security must not only take into account the effects of military action against civilian populations, but must afford those effects a weight equal to or greater than force protection considerations.

The current western focus on technology as saviour is dangerously narrow and threatens to make militaries unusable. If a state asset lies dormant for too long without prospect of perceived utility, it is vulnerable to budget cuts and obsolescence. But militaries are vital to a human security perspective. They hold the key to enforcing the norms that lead to stability and peace. There is a professional obligation on the part of defence elites to ensure that the state assets under their stewardship remain modern and relevant. Trying to achieve this through a singular reliance on technology without a solid perspective that balances a state's interests and values is irresponsible. Human security provides an excellent normative framework that will prove itself strategically, operationally and tactically vital in the prosecution of post-modern security operations.

Endnotes

1. John Ralston Saul, *The Doubter's Companion: A Dictionary of Aggressive Common Sense*. (Penguin Books, 1995) pp. 318-319.
2. Lloyd Axworthy, *Human Security: Safety for People in a Changing World*. (Ottawa: Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, 1999) <http://www.dfait.maeci.gc.ca/foreignp/HumanSecurity/secur-e.htm#3> Accessed June 05/00
3. Pauline H. Baker, and Angeli E. Weeler, *An Analytical Model of Internal Conflict and State Collapse: Manual for Practitioners*. (The Fund for Peace, 1998)
4. Paul Heinbecker, "Human Security: The Hard Edge", *Canadian Military Journal*, Spring 2000 (Ottawa: Department of Public Works and Government Services, 2000) <http://www.journal.dnd.ca/vol1/no1_e/policy_e/pol1_e.html> Accessed June 13/00
5. Madeline K. Albright, "Sustaining Democracy in the Twenty-First Century", *Rostov Lecture Series* (Washington D.C.: School of Advanced International Studies, John Hopkins University, June 18, 2000) <http://www.secretary.state .gov/www/statements/2000/000618.html> Accessed January 26/00
6. David L. Bashow, "Reconciling the Irreconcilable? Canada's Foreign and Defence Policy Linkage", *Canadian Military Journal*, Spring 2000 (Ottawa: Department of Public Works and Government Services, 2000) <http://www.journal.dnd.ca/vol1/no1_e/policy_e/pol2_e.html> Accessed June 13/00
7. Lloyd Axworthy, *op cit.*
8. David L. Bashow, *op cit.*
9. Lloyd Axworthy, *op cit.*
10. "US Soldiers Accused of Mistreating Kosovars During Protests", *CNN.com*. Posted at 17:55 EST, January, 23/00 <http://cnn.com/2000/WORLD/europe/01/23/us.kosovo.soldiers/index.html> Accessed Feb. 14/00
11. Jeffery Smith, *op cit.*
12. Michael O'Hanlon, *op cit.*
13. Colonel w. Semianiw, *The Revolution in Military Affairs: All That Glitters Is Not Gold*. (Ottawa: Canadian Department of National Defence, 1998) <http://www.cfcsc.dnd.ca/irc/amsc/amsc1/038.html > Accessed March 19/00
14. Michael Ignatieff, *Virtual War* (Toronto: Penguin Books Ltd., 2000) pg. 122.
15. Volker C. Franke, "Learning Peace: Attitudes of Future Officers Toward the Security Requirements of the Post-Cold War World", *US Post Cold-War Civil-Military Relations* (John M Olin Institute for Strategic Studies, Harvard University, January 1997) <http://hdc-www.harvard.edu/cfia/olin/pubs/no9.htm> Accessed Feb. 14/00
16. Olga Perova, "Russian Restricts Movements of Chechen Men", *Reuters Web Post, World Headlines*. Posted at 0439 EST, January 13/00. <http://dailynews .yahoo.com/h/nm/20000113/wl/russia-chechnya_758.html> Accessed January 13/00
17. "NATO Under Fire For Accelerated Video", *CBC News Webposted*. Posted at 2300 EST, January 06/00 <http://cbc.ca/cgi-bin/templates/view.cgi?/news/2000/01/06/nato000106> Accessed January 07/00
18. Geoffery Barker, "Slow Politics Hamper Military Export", *Australian Financial Review*, (John Fairfax Group Pty, Ltd., May 17/00) pg. 11
19. Geoffery Barker, ibid.
20. "The Victims are Villains", *Weekly Mail Guardian*, October 25, 1996.
21. Ahmed S. Hashim, "The Revolution in Military Affairs Outside the West", *Journal of International Affairs*, Vol. 51, Issue 2, March 1998. <http://www.britannica.com/bcom/magazine/article/0,5744,213381,00.html> Accessed June 13/00
22. "Serbia to Charge Western Leaders with War Crimes", *The Seattle Times*, May 22/00. pg. A17.
23. Application Instituting Proceedings filed in the Registry of the ICJ on April 29/99. Legality of Use of Force Yugoslavia v. Canada. <http://www.icj.lwa.gla.ac.uk/icjwww/idocket/iycaap.../iyca_appliaction_19990428.htm> Accessed on May 02/00

Captain Thompson is a member of the Pearson Peacekeeping Centre's external faculty.

The views expressed are those of the author and do not necessarily represent those of the CISS or its members.

Copyright 2001

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part. Kindly credit the CISS.

About the CISS

The Canadian Institute of Strategic Studies meets a need for a body of information on Canadian security issues and promotes public awareness of the significance of national and international developments. The CISS provides a forum for discussion of strategic matters, and through its educational and informational activities seeks to improve the basis for informed choice by the public of Canada and its leaders.